

**CHANNEL TUNNEL RAIL LINK
UNION RAILWAYS LIMITED**

**Archaeological Evaluation at Harringe Lane
(ARC HNG97), Kent
Environmental Statement Route Window 35/36**

FINAL FIELDWORK REPORT

31st March 1999

**Contract no. 194/870
WA Report no. 43506e**

Wessex Archaeology

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Volume 1 of 1

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31st March 1999

Contents

Executive Summary	iii
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FACTUAL STATEMENT

1	INTRODUCTION	
1.1	Project Background.....	1
1.2	Site Description, Topography, Geology and Hydrography.....	1
1.3	Methods	2
1.4	Variations.....	3
2	RESULTS	
2.1	General.....	3
2.2	Stratigraphy	4
2.3	Structural Report	5
2.4	Artefactual Report.....	7
2.5	Environmental Report.....	8

STATEMENT OF IMPORTANCE

3	CONCLUSIONS	
3.1	Extent of Archaeological Remains	10
3.2	Nature of Archaeological Remains.....	11
3.3	Character of Site.....	12
3.4	Site Chronology	13
4	IMPORTANCE OF REMAINS	
4.1	Scheduled Monument Criteria	13
4.2	Condition	13
4.3	Period	13
4.4	Rarity	14
4.5	Vulnerability.....	14
4.6	Diversity	14
4.7	Documentation	14
4.8	Group value	15
4.9	Potential.....	15
4.10	Discussion.....	15
5	BIBLIOGRAPHY	17

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1:** Context Inventory
Appendix 2: Artefact Quantification
Appendix 3: Ecofact quantification

FIGURES (after Appendices)

- Figure 1:** Site location
Figure 2: Trench layout summarising presence of archaeological remains
Figure 3: Plans of trenches 1798TT, 1799TT and 1800TT
Figure 4: Plans of trenches 1802TT, 1807TT and 3039TT

CHANNEL TUNNEL RAIL LINK UNION RAILWAYS LIMITED

Archaeological Evaluation at Harringe Lane (ARC HNG97), Kent Environmental Statement Route Window 35/36

Executive Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Union Railways Limited to carry out an archaeological evaluation on a site to the south-west of Sellindge village (centred on URL grid point 89200 38000; NGR grid point TR 09200 38000), known as Harringe Lane. The potential for archaeological remains within the site had been identified by an earlier Environmental Statement (URL 1994) which included fieldwalking (URL 1995) and geophysical prospection (URL 1996). This potential was defined as the possibility of discovering subsoil features and deposits of archaeological interest which may be associated with, or in close proximity to, surface concentrations of prehistoric worked flint and Iron Age, Romano-British and medieval pottery recorded during fieldwalking or anomalies recorded during geophysical survey.

The evaluation revealed a small number of archaeological features, the majority concentrated towards the north-west corner of the site on a gentle south-west facing slope above the East Stour River. Virtually all of the features in this area have been assigned a certain or probable Late Iron Age/early Romano-British date on the basis of the small assemblage of pottery recovered, although at least one may have been of earlier, Late Bronze Age date. They comprised six shallow ditches or gullies and two shallow pits with evidence for *in situ* burning, both possibly representing hearths. A scatter of Late Iron Age/early Romano-British pottery sherds recorded from fieldwalking approximately 100 m to the south during the CTRL Environmental Assessment (the area evaluated by machine trenching was not fieldwalked) may represent part of the same spread of Late Iron Age/early Romano-British activity. An area of high magnetic susceptibility recorded during geophysical prospection also appears to partly correspond with the area covered by this group of features. Together, this evidence might be interpreted as indicating Late Iron Age/early Romano-British settlement rather than, for example, landscape elements (ie field boundaries), although no structural features were certainly identified. Furthermore, the small quantities of charred plant remains recovered from the possible hearths, one perhaps of Late Bronze Age date, suggest that these features did not lie at the centre of major domestic or crop processing areas.

A post-medieval ditch towards the north-east corner of the site is likely to represent one of several former north – south field boundaries that existed prior to construction of the M20 motorway, and which can be discerned on the magnetometer survey. Other geophysical anomalies were shown to reflect the presence of recent land drains.

Finds from subsoil contexts include a small quantity of undiagnostic prehistoric worked flint and a few sherds of probable Late Neolithic, Late Bronze Age, Late Iron Age/early Romano-British and medieval pottery.

FACTUAL STATEMENT

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Union Railways Limited (URL) to carry out an archaeological evaluation on a site to the south-west of Sellindge village (centred on URL grid point 89200 18000; NGR grid point TR 09200 38000; **Figure 1**), known as **Harringe Lane** (site code ARC HNG97; Environmental Statement Route Window 35/36).

1.1.2 The evaluation forms part of a programme of archaeological investigation along the proposed route of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL), and was preceded by an Environmental Assessment (URL 1994), fieldwalking survey (URL 1995) and geophysical prospection (URL 1996).

1.1.3 The fieldwork was conducted in accordance with a written *Agreement for the provision of Archaeological Investigations* (URL 1997), which defined the scope, aims and methods for the project. In addition to general aims, the following site specific aim was identified:

- *the possibility of discovering subsoil features and deposits of archaeological interest which may be associated with, or in close proximity to, surface concentrations of prehistoric worked flint and Iron Age, Romano-British and medieval pottery recorded during fieldwalking or anomalies recorded during geophysical prospection.*

1.1.4 The fieldwork was carried out between 29th June 1998 and 7th July 1998, with preliminary survey work carried out on 28th June 1998.

1.2 Site Description, Topography, Geology and Hydrography

1.2.1 The site comprised three separate areas or plots within three adjacent arable fields and covered a total area of approximately 4.95 hectares (**Figure 2**). A narrow east-to-west strip (Plot 1) extended west of Harringe Lane between the M20 motorway (to the north) and the Ashford to Folkestone railway (to the south), and two smaller north-to-south strips (Plots 2 and 3) lay either side of Harringe Lane to the south of the railway. Various boundaries to these plots were defined by the limit of the proposed development, and did not correlate with existing land divisions. The evaluation comprised 20 machine trenches (trench 1795TT – trench 1813TT inclusive and trench 3039TT) with a total length of 550m, each 1.9 m wide with the majority measuring 30 m in length (trench 1806TT was 10 m long, and trenches 1801TT, 1803TT and 1805TT

were each 20 m long). At the time of the evaluation Plot 1 lay under oats and Plots 2 and 3 under wheat, with both crops standing to a height of c. 0.75 – 1 m.

- 1.2.2 The site occupies a gentle to moderate south- to south-west-facing slope on the north side of the East Stour River flood plain, descending within the site limits from a height of c. 66 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) in the north-west to c. 54 m aOD in the south, with the steepest slope in Plots 2 and 3 and towards the west end of Plot 1. In a broader context, the area is situated to the south of, and below, the sand, gault and chalk ridge that rises to form the North Downs, which in the immediate area are at a height of c. 180 m aOD, along the line of the North Downs/ Pilgrims' Way.
- 1.2.3 Underlying drift geology for the area is recorded as Pleistocene Head Brickearth, with more recent alluvium associated with the course of the East Stour River to the south. Solid geology is recorded as comprising Cretaceous Lower Greensand Sandgate Beds, outcropping at the base of the sand, gault and chalk ridge that forms the edge of the North Downs to the north (Ordnance Survey 1976).
- 1.2.4 The hydrography of the area is dominated by the East Stour River, which follows a meandering course immediately to the south of the site.

1.3 Methods

- 1.3.1 As noted above (paragraph 1.1.3), the fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the *Agreement for the provision of Archaeological Investigations* (URL 1997), which contains a detailed methodology for all aspects of the evaluation fieldwork. This methodology will not be repeated in full here, although a brief summary is reiterated below:

- *allowing for agreed variations noted below, all trenches were located to a horizontal accuracy of ± 0.50 m and elevation accuracy of ± 0.02 m (per kilometre traverse) in relation to trench location plans provided and Ordnance Datum (Newlyn);*
- *all trenches were excavated in discrete 0.10-0.20 m spits using a tracked excavator with a 1.80 m wide toothless ditching bucket under close archaeological supervision, to either 1.20 m depth, the surface of in situ geology, or the surface at which archaeological remains could be identified, whichever was encountered first;*
- *all trenches were cleaned manually, with a sufficient sample of all exposed features investigated, and sampled where appropriate, in order to fulfill the aims of the evaluation; and,*
- *all recording conformed to the standards of current best practice, and included a full graphic and photographic record of all stages of the evaluation.*

1.4 Variations

1.4.1 The following agreed variations were actioned during the course of the fieldwork.

- *trench 1807TT increased in length by 5 m to the west to compensate for the shortening of trench 1811TT*
- *trench 1809TT moved 25 m to the south to avoid buried services and overhead power lines*
- *trench 1810TT moved 15 m to the south to avoid the base of an electricity pylon*
- *trench 1811TT shortened in length by 5 m to the south-east to avoid machine-tracking outside the designated site boundary*

2 RESULTS

2.1 General

2.1.1 In summary, 20 evaluation trenches were excavated within the defined site (**Figure 2**), revealing two groups of potentially archaeological features, all of which were investigated. These features were located towards the western and eastern ends respectively of Plot 1 of the evaluation area. The features towards the western end included six shallow ditches or gullies (in trenches 1799TT, 1800TT, 1802TT and 3039TT) and two shallow pits with evidence for *in situ* burning, both possibly representing hearths (in trenches 1798TT and 3039TT). The features towards the eastern end included a ditch (in trench 1807TT).

2.1.2 Artefacts and material recovered from these features include a few tiny sherds of pottery of Late Bronze Age date from the possible hearth in trench 3039TT, a larger quantity of Late Iron Age/early Romano-British pottery from three of the ditches or gullies in trenches 1799TT, 1800TT and 1802TT, and a few fragments of post-medieval ceramic building material and two iron nails from the ditch in trench 1807TT.

2.1.3 Finds recovered from subsoil contexts comprise several pieces of undiagnostic prehistoric worked flint from trenches 1795TT, 1796TT, 1797TT, 1798TT and 1813TT, three joining sherds of probable Late Neolithic pottery from trench 1798TT, one sherd of Late Bronze Age pottery from a modern drain in trench 1799TT, and four sherds of Late Bronze Age, Late Iron Age/early Romano-British and medieval pottery from trench 1813TT.

2.1.4 In addition, three modern field drains were identified, in trenches 1797TT, 1799TT and 1811TT respectively, with that in trench 1811TT responsible for a

faint, curvilinear geophysical anomaly recorded on the magnetometer survey (URL 1996, map 12.3).

- 2.1.5 A context inventory (by trench) is provided in **Appendix 1**, whilst deposits and features of note are described below.

2.2 Stratigraphy

- 2.2.1 The stratigraphic sequence identified within the evaluation area can be broadly summarised as:

- Lower Greensand in the north-eastern corner of the site;
- Head Brickearth;
- Subsoil;
- Modern topsoil.

Lower Greensand

- 2.2.2 This natural deposit was recorded within seven of the 20 trenches (the eastern ends of trenches 1800TT and 1802TT, and trenches 1803TT – 1807TT), on the higher ground in the north-eastern part of the site above *c.* 64.50 m OD. It was sealed by Head Brickearth or, where this was absent, by subsoil. It can be characterised as being heavily fractured and weathered, and varied in colour from off-white to pale grey.

Head Brickearth

- 2.2.3 This natural deposit was recorded within 15 of the trenches (the western ends of trenches 1800TT - 1802TT, and trenches 1795TT – 1799TT, trench 1801TT, trenches 1808TT – 1813TT, and trench 3039TT), on the lower ground below *c.* 64.50 m OD. Sondages dug to a maximum depth of 1.55 m in trenches 1796 – 1798TT and trench 1801TT showed the Head Brickearth to be up to 0.8 m or more thick and to overlie the Lower Greensand. It was sealed directly by subsoil, and can be characterised as a yellowish brown clayey silt.

Subsoil

- 2.2.4 This occurred in all of the trenches and can be characterised as a yellowish brown sandy silt loam with occasional small subrounded flint gravel. It had an average thickness of approximately 0.25 m, with a minimum of 0.06 m (in trenches 1804TT – 1805TT) and a maximum of 0.9 m in trench 1797TT. Trench 1797 TT lay in the part of the site where the ground sloped most steeply, and the greater thickness of subsoil in this trench may, in part, reflect a build up of colluvial deposits towards the base of the slope, although no distinction could be made between subsoil and any colluvial deposits present.

- 2.2.5 The subsoil directly overlay natural deposits and sealed archaeological features of certain or probable Late Bronze Age and Late Iron Age/early Romano-British date in trenches 1798TT – 1800TT, trench 1802TT and trench 3039TT. It appeared to be cut by a post-medieval ditch in trench 1807TT and was sealed by topsoil.
- 2.2.6 Although the subsoil represents a context disturbed by ploughing, a number of residual finds were recorded from this horizon. These include several pieces of prehistoric worked flint from trenches 1795TT, 1796TT, 1797TT and 1798TT towards the western end of Plot 1 of the evaluation area, three joining sherds of probable Late Neolithic pottery from trench 1798TT, and four sherds of Late Bronze Age, Late Iron Age/early Romano-British and medieval pottery from trench 1813TT in Plot 3 of the evaluation area.

Topsoil

- 2.2.7 In general, topsoil encountered throughout the evaluation area comprised 0.10 - 0.35 m thickness of light to mid greyish brown silty clay loam with occasional small to medium subrounded flint gravel. The topsoil was covered by cereal crops in all trenches at the time of the evaluation.

2.3 Structural Report (Figures 3 and 4)

Trench 1798TT (Figure 3)

- 2.3.1 A sub-circular shallow pit or hollow (**179804**) which lay in the western half of the trench may represent the remains of a hearth. It measured approximately 1 m in diameter and was *c.* 0.1 m deep with a flat bottom. There was a small area of burning on the bottom where the natural brickearth had been scorched red, and the fill (179803) of dark greyish brown silty loam contained a considerable amount of charcoal flecking along with some larger pieces of charcoal. A bulk soil sample was taken, but no finds were recovered from this or the remainder of the fill which was fully excavated. There was some evidence of animal disturbance within the western half of the fill of this feature.

Trench 1799TT (Figure 3)

- 2.3.2 Two features were recorded in this trench and comprised a narrow cut containing a modern land drain (**179905**) at the extreme south end (this produced one residual sherd of Late Bronze Age pottery and is not further described here), and a ditch (**179907**) immediately to the north of this.
- 2.3.3 Ditch **179907** was aligned approximately east-west, and was up to *c.* 2 m wide and 0.5 m deep. It had an open, U-shaped profile, with somewhat irregular sides and bottom, and was filled with a mid brown sandy silt loam containing some small fragments of greensand (179906). The fill produced a small assemblage of pottery comprising eight sherds of Late Iron Age/early Romano-British pottery and one residual sherd of Late Bronze Age pottery.

Trench 1800TT (Figure 3)

- 2.3.4 This trench contained three linear or curvilinear features, all aligned approximately north-east to south-west, with gully **180004** and ditch **180006** lying 1.5 m apart at the west end of the trench, and gully **180009** 16 m further to the east.
- 2.3.5 Gully **180004** was up to 0.5 m wide and 0.2 m deep with a V-shaped profile. It was filled with a dark brown silty clay loam containing some fragments of greensand (180003), but produced no finds.
- 2.3.6 Ditch **180006** lay immediately to the east of gully 180004 and parallel to it. This was a more substantial feature, 1.2 m wide and 0.45 m deep, with steeply sloping sides and a flat bottom. The fill of dark brown silty clay loam containing some greensand fragments and a few flecks of burnt clay (180005) produced a single sherd of Late Iron Age/early Romano-British pottery.
- 2.3.7 Gully **180009** was a somewhat irregular feature up to 1 m wide and 0.18 m deep. The fill of brown silty clay loam contained some greensand fragments (180008), but produced no finds.

Trench 1802TT (Figure 4)

- 2.3.8 A single feature, gully **180206**, lay within this trench. It was aligned north-west to south-east, was 0.5 m wide and 0.15 m deep with an open U-shaped profile, and filled with a dark brown silty clay loam with occasional greensand fragments (180205). This produced a single sherd of Late Iron Age/early Romano-British pottery.

Trench 1807TT (Figure 4)

- 2.3.9 This trench contained three features comprising ditch **180704**, pit **180706** and cut **180708**.
- 2.3.10 Ditch **180704** was aligned north to south and, at the time of the evaluation, was visible continuing for several metres to the south of the trench as a positive cropmark. It was approximately 1.5 m wide and 0.4 m deep with an open V-shaped profile, and appeared to be cut from within the subsoil rather than being sealed by it, although the precise relationship had been obscured by recent ploughing. It was filled with a mid brown silty clay loam with common greensand inclusions (180705), and there was some evidence for animal disturbance. The fill produced three small fragments of post-medieval ceramic building material, two iron nails, and two tiny sherds of residual Late Iron Age/early Romano-British pottery.
- 2.3.11 Pit **180706** was an elongated oval feature which extended to the north of the trench. Limited investigation showed it to have vertical sides, as far as was excavated (to a depth of 0.4 m), and to be cut from directly beneath the topsoil indicating, therefore, a modern date. It was filled with comparatively loose

sandy silt loam and abundant greensand fragments (180707), but produced no finds.

- 2.3.12 Cut **180708** was a shallow feature less than 0.1 m deep exposed for a distance of 4 m along the northern edge of the trench. The cut appeared to be quite well-defined, with square corners, but its form was not established. It was sealed beneath subsoil, contained a brown silty clay (1807090) which produced no finds, and may have been natural in origin.

Trench 3039TT (Figure 4)

- 2.3.13 Two features were recorded in this trench, with shallow pit or hearth **303904** towards the north end and ditch **303906** towards the south end.
- 2.3.14 Feature **303904**, possibly representing a hearth, comprised a shallow, sub-circular pit approximately 1.5 m in diameter which extended just beyond the limit of excavation to the west. This was up to 0.1 m deep, flat-bottomed, and the surface of the natural brickearth in the centre had been burnt red to a depth of approximately 0.02 m. The fill (303903) was a very dark grey silty loam containing abundant charcoal flecking, but no burnt clay or ash was noted. A bulk soil sample was taken and this produced three very small sherds of Late Bronze Age pottery; no finds were recovered from the remainder of the fill which was fully excavated within the limits of the trench.
- 2.3.15 Ditch **303906**, aligned east to west, was up to 1.7 m wide and 0.3 m deep, and had steeply sloping sides and a flat bottom. The fill of yellowish brown slightly sandy clayey silt contained occasional small fragments of greensand, but produced no finds.

2.4 Artefactual Report by Lorraine Mephram

- 2.4.1 A very small quantity of artefactual material, in a limited range of material types, was recovered from ten trenches. Finds totals, by material type and by context, and including finds extracted from soil samples, are given in **Appendix 2**. The potential date range of material recovered is Neolithic to medieval.

Pottery

- 2.4.2 The small pottery assemblage (24 sherds) includes material of prehistoric, Late Iron Age/Romano-British and medieval date. Potentially the earliest material is represented by three joining body sherds in a fabric with prominent coarse flint inclusions protruding through the surfaces (trench 1798TT). Such coarse, flint-tempered fabrics are characteristic of the later Neolithic period although, in the absence of any diagnostic features, these sherds cannot be dated with any certainty. Five sherds (trenches 1799TT and 3039TT) are in slightly finer flint-tempered fabrics more typical of the post-Deverel-Rimbury ceramic tradition of the later Bronze Age in southern England, and these may be augmented by two further sherds (trench 1813TT) in an unusual fabric with large inclusions of iron-

rich compound, although the dating for these sherds is more uncertain. Thirteen sherds (trenches 1799TT, 1800TT, 1802TT, 1807TT, 1813TT) are in grog-tempered fabrics, and include jar rim and base sherds. These represent a native Late Iron Age ceramic tradition which continued into the early Romano-British period; a date range of 1st century BC to 1st century AD may be suggested for these sherds. One medieval sherd was identified, a jar rim sherd (trench 1813TT) in a moderately coarse, oxidised sandy fabric, probably of 13th or 14th century date.

Worked Flint

- 2.4.3 The nine pieces of worked flint do not include any chronologically distinctive forms; all are waste flakes or core fragments. One piece is burnt (trench 1795TT) and two pieces are lightly patinated (trench 1798TT), while the remainder are unpatinated and in relatively fresh condition. The raw material is likely to derive from a local gravel source. A broad date range of Neolithic to Bronze Age is suggested.

Ceramic Building Material

- 2.4.4 The three fragments of ceramic building material all derived from the same context (trench 1807TT). These are small undiagnostic fragments, but are likely to be of post-medieval date.

Metalwork

- 2.4.5 One iron nail in two pieces was recovered (trench 1807TT). This is a handmade, square-sectioned nail, a type which is not chronologically distinctive, but a post-medieval date is likely given associated ceramic building material (see above).

2.5 Environmental Report by Michael J Allen and Sarah Wyles

- 2.5.1 Two 10 - 15 litre bulk samples were taken from two possible hearths, one of possible Late Bronze Age date (trench 3039TT, feature **303904**, fill 303903) and the other undated (trench 1798TT, feature **179804**, fill 179803) for the retrieval of charred plants and charcoal remains. The samples were pre-soaked in water, with the addition of small quantities of hydrogen peroxide (100vol. c. 30% hydrogen peroxide). After soaking the samples were transferred to a flotation tank, within a wire basket holding a nylon mesh of 0.5 mm aperture. Water was pumped through the sample and the flot retained on a 0.5 mm nylon mesh. The residues were fractionated into 5.6 mm, 2 mm and 1 mm fractions and dried. The coarse fractions (>5.6 mm) were sorted, weighed and discarded. The flots were scanned under a x10 - x30 stereo-binocular microscope and the presence of charred remains quantified (**Appendix 3**), in order to present data to assess the preservation and nature of the charred plant and charcoal remains and determine the potential of the charred plant and charcoal remains.

Charred plant remains

- 2.5.2 Both samples produced large flots (average flot size for 10 litres is 60 millilitres) with 5-20% rooty material and low numbers of uncharred weed seeds which can be indicative of stratigraphic movement. A few charred grain fragments were observed in both samples, and sparse quantities of charred weed seeds in feature **303904**, sample 1 (trench 3039TT).

Charcoal

- 2.5.3 Very large quantities of charcoal fragments of greater than 5.6mm were retrieved from both samples, and particularly from feature **303904**, sample 1 (trench 3039TT). The charcoal from both samples was mainly large wood fragments and is present in sufficient quantity to allow species identification and/or radiocarbon dating.

STATEMENT OF IMPORTANCE

3 CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Extent of Archaeological Remains

- 3.1.1 Two groups of archaeological features were recorded located towards the western and eastern ends respectively of Plot 1 of the evaluation area. The features towards the western end included six shallow ditches or gullies (in trenches 1799TT, 1800TT, 1802TT and 3039TT) and two shallow pits or hollows with evidence for *in situ* burning, both possibly representing hearths (in trenches 1798TT and 3039TT). Artefacts recovered from these features include three tiny sherds of Late Bronze Age pottery from the possible hearth in trench 3039TT and a small quantity of Late Iron Age/early Romano-British pottery from three of the ditches or gullies in trenches 1799TT, 1800TT and 1802TT. The four remaining, undated features in this area are considered most likely to have been of Late Iron Age/early Romano-British date, although an earlier, Late Bronze Age date cannot be ruled out. The features towards the eastern end of Plot 1 included a ditch of post medieval date, with the other features being of probable geological origin or modern date (all in trench 1807TT).
- 3.1.2 Finds recovered from subsoil contexts include several pieces of prehistoric worked flint from trenches 1795TT, 1796TT, 1797TT and 1798TT, three joining sherds of probable Neolithic pottery from trench 1798TT and one sherd of Late Bronze Age pottery from trench 1799TT, all towards the western end of Plot 1 of the evaluation area predominantly, but not exclusively, in the vicinity of the subsurface archaeological features. Two sherds of Late Bronze Age pottery, one sherd of of Late Iron Age/early Romano-British pottery and a single sherd of medieval pottery came from trench 1813TT in Plot 3 to the south-west.
- 3.1.3 The preliminary fieldwalking survey of part of the evaluation area which included Plot 2 and Plot 3 (the field containing Plot 1 was not suitable for fieldwalking at the time) highlighted a general scatter of burnt flints and worked flints, including a fragmentary, earlier Neolithic leaf-shaped arrowhead and flint scrapers, and a cluster of five Middle Iron Age flint-tempered pottery sherds (URL 1995, 179, maps 19a-c). The majority of the archaeological features found in the evaluation trenches have been assigned to the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British period and, therefore, post-date this earlier, prehistoric material which may have derived from activity focussed more closely on the East Stour River approximately 250 m to the south-west. However, the scatter of ten Late Iron Age/early Romano sherds found during preliminary fieldwalking approximately 100 m to the south of the subsoil features found in the evaluation towards the west end of Plot 1 may represent part of the same spread of Late Iron Age/early Romano-British activity (URL 1995, 179, map 19d). An area of high magnetic susceptibility recorded during geophysical prospection also

appears to partly correspond with the area covered by this group of features (URL 1996, plan 12.1), although the area surveyed only extended as far as or just beyond the eastern limit of this group.

- 3.1.4 In addition, three modern land drains were identified, in trenches 1797TT, 1799TT and 1811TT respectively, with that in trench 1811TT responsible for a faint, curvilinear geophysical anomaly recorded on the magnetometer survey (URL 1996, plans 12.2 and 12.3, anomaly w). None of the remaining geophysical anomalies recorded in this survey was demonstrated to have had an archaeological origin: Linear anomaly r was caused by a high voltage electricity cable, linear anomaly s by a land drain, and anomalies t, u and v, identified as possible pits or archaeological features, either lay outside the evaluation trenches or were of probable geological origin.
- 3.1.5 No subsurface features were found to correspond with the uniform but not particularly dense scatter of 56 sherds of medieval pottery recorded during the preliminary fieldwalking survey in the fields which included Plots 2 and 3 of the evaluation (URL 1995, 179, map 19e).

3.2 Nature of the Archaeological Remains

- 3.2.1 The possible Late Bronze Age hearth and all of the certain or probable Late Iron Age/early Romano-British features survived as shallow cuts (i.e. not greater than 0.45 m deep) excavated into the surface of the *in situ* geological natural, and were sealed by subsoil. The post-medieval ditch also survived as a shallow cut, excavated through the subsoil and into the surface of the underlying *in situ* geological natural, and was sealed by topsoil. Inter-relationships between features were not observed.
- 3.2.2 No structural remains were certainly identified, although there is a slight possibility that gullies 18806 and 180204 may represent parts of ring-gullies or similar structural elements, perhaps associated with Iron Age round-houses.
- 3.2.3 One of the possible hearths, 303904, may be of Late Bronze Age date, and the other, 179804, is considered likely to be of broadly contemporaneous late prehistoric date. Hearth 303904 contained extensive traces of burning in the form of heat-affected natural brickearth at the base of the cut, but hearth 179804 contained only vestigial traces of burning; neither had any form of lining. The fills of both hearths contained charcoal, with comparatively large amounts present in 303904, but neither appeared to clearly represent domestic hearths and they may have been associated with some other pyrotechnical activity (eg bonfires).
- 3.2.4 The remaining features were all linear in nature, comprising mostly shallow ditches and gullies of certain or probable Late Iron Age/early Romano-British date in trenches 1799TT, 1800TT, 1802TT and 3039TT. These are likely to represent boundary or drainage features. The post-medieval ditch in trench

1807TT represents one of several north-south field boundaries which existed prior to the construction of the M20 motorway and subsequently infilled.

- 3.2.5 A small quantity of artefacts recovered were provenanced from subsoil contexts. these include a few pieces of undiagnostic prehistoric worked flint and several sherds of probable Late Neolithic, Late Bronze Age and medieval pottery, some recovered in the vicinity of the subsurface Late Iron Age/early Romano-British remains. These artefacts, in conjunction with those recovered from preliminary fieldwalking, including a fragmentary, earlier Neolithic leaf-shaped arrowhead, flint scrapers and five flint-tempered Middle Iron Age pottery sherds, may indicate that settlement contemporaneous with these finds occurred in the vicinity, although none of the features recorded during the evaluation, perhaps with the exception of a possible Late Bronze Age hearth, can be positively ascribed to any of these periods.

3.3 Character of Site

- 3.3.1 The body of evidence (incorporating fieldwalking and geophysical results, subsoil finds from machine trenches, and subsurface archaeological features) would appear to indicate an area of Late Iron Age-early Romano/British activity in the north-west part of the site towards the western end of Plot 1, with some slight evidence for less intensive Late Bronze Age activity in the same area.
- 3.3.2 The nature of the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British features (summarised above) and their apparent concentration within a restricted area might indicate settlement on the site. However, it is perhaps equally likely that they were associated agricultural features, such as field boundaries.
- 3.3.3 The possible Late Bronze Age hearth appears not to have served a domestic function and may indicate agricultural activity, perhaps a bonfire.
- 3.3.4 The post-medieval ditch is certainly indicative of agricultural activity.
- 3.3.5 It is possible that the material recovered from subsoil contexts, including undiagnostic prehistoric worked flint and sherds of probable Late Neolithic and Late Bronze Age pottery, represents more than just casual losses or rubbish disposal in an agricultural environment. When considered in conjunction with the few sherds of Late Bronze Age pottery residual in later features, the possible Late Bronze Age hearth and the finds recovered from preliminary fieldwalking, including a fragmentary, earlier Neolithic leaf-shaped arrowhead, flint scrapers and five flint-tempered Middle Iron Age pottery sherds, this material may be indicative of Neolithic, Late Bronze Age and Middle Iron Age settlement activity in the vicinity.

3.4 Site Chronology

- 3.4.1 As summarised above, datable archaeological features have indicated possible Late Bronze Age activity, some Late Iron Age/early Romano-British activity and very limited post-medieval activity within the evaluation area. Stratigraphic relationships were not identified to enable a stratigraphic sequence to be defined, and comparatively small amounts of datable finds were recovered from these features. Artefacts recovered from the subsoil include several pieces of undiagnostic prehistoric worked flint, and a few sherds of probable Late Neolithic, Late Bronze Age and medieval pottery.

4 IMPORTANCE OF REMAINS

4.1 Scheduled Monument Criteria

- 4.1.1 The Secretary of State's criteria for scheduling monuments has been addressed. The remains recorded during this evaluation do not satisfy any of the criteria as defined.

4.2 Condition

- 4.2.1 Archaeological features recorded during the evaluation are preserved as shallow cuts in the surface of *in situ* geological deposits, with all but the post-medieval ditch in trench 1807TT sealed by subsoil and topsoil. The subsoil probably serves to protect the majority of these features from present-day ploughing, although it is very likely that all have suffered varying degrees of truncation in the past.
- 4.2.2 Cultural remains have survived, including pottery, ceramic building material, worked flint and metal objects. However, these finds are not prolific, although the majority can be confidently identified as Late Iron Age/early Romano-British or earlier.
- 4.2.3 Environmental analysis has demonstrated that little palaeo-environmental material has survived, or was ever present, in the samples examined. However, charcoal is present in substantial quantities.

4.3 Period

- 4.3.1 Prehistoric settlement patterns are not well-documented in the area. Secure chronological indicators from the evaluation are restricted to a few tiny sherds of Late Bronze Age pottery and a dozen sherds of Late Iron Age/early Romano-British pottery recovered from archaeological features, and a small quantity of undiagnostic prehistoric worked flint, and a few sherds of probable Late Neolithic, Late Bronze Age and medieval pottery, most of which were recovered from subsoil contexts.

4.3.2 The Late Iron Age/early Romano-British features and associated pottery are of local importance, and further work within the evaluation area could contribute significantly to an understanding of the nature of Iron Age occupation in Kent which, at present, is not well understood.

4.3.3 The post-medieval field boundary is of limited local interest, and it is doubtful whether further work would contribute any additional information.

4.4 Rarity

4.4.1 The possible Late Bronze Age and Late Iron Age/early Romano-British remains recorded during the evaluation are of note, in particular, the observation of a relatively high proportion of discrete features within the footprint of five trenches towards the western end of Plot 1. Bronze Age and Iron Age sites in Kent are comparatively rare; few large-scale excavations have been carried out to modern standards, and the quality of evidence is poor.

4.4.2 The small quantity of undiagnostic prehistoric worked flint and few sherds of probable Late Neolithic, Late Bronze Age and medieval pottery may represent stray losses and/or manuring on fields. However, when considered in conjunction with the finds from fieldwalking, this may indicate activity, possibly settlement, in the immediate vicinity of the evaluation area, although not apparently extending into it. As has been noted above, prehistoric settlement patterns are not well documented in the area and the quality of evidence is poor

4.5 Vulnerability

4.5.1 There is evidence that some of the archaeological remains have been subjected to truncation, particularly in areas where topsoil and subsoil areas shallowest. However, those archaeological features which lie towards the bottom of the gentle south to south-west facing slope in trenches 1799TT and 3039TT are likely to be protected by the gradual accumulation of ploughsoil induced by tillage. Should deeper ploughing or any other invasive groundwork occur, then this situation will clearly not remain the case. All archaeological remains will be under threat from construction of the CTRL.

4.6 Diversity

4.6.1 Although feature types include both discrete and linear remains, there was no significant diversity of features or finds.

4.7 Documentation

4.7.1 Little is recorded of the evaluation area other than the pre-20th century arrangement of fields which formerly ran north to south rather than east to west.

4.8 Group Value

- 4.8.1 There appears to be little group value that can be attributed to the results of this evaluation.

4.9 Potential

Structural

- 4.9.1 The archaeological features recorded offer reasonable potential for contributing to the understanding of Late Iron Age/early Romano-British settlement and agricultural activity in the area.

Artefactual

- 4.9.2 The small prehistoric pottery and flint assemblage is useful as an indicator of activity, but is otherwise of limited significance, and there is little potential for further analysis.

Environmental

- 4.9.3 Both of the possible hearths sampled (one perhaps of Late Bronze Age date, the other undated) produced small quantities of charred grain, but no chaff, and the potential of the charred plant remains from these samples is, therefore, low. However, large quantities of charcoal was present in both samples, and the identification of this has the potential to determine if the species have been selected for their long, or high temperature, burning, whether there is a range of species more typical of the collection of wood locally for use in small-scale domestic hearths, or whether there is a mixture of species perhaps indicative of bonfires associated with vegetation clearance. Examination of the charcoals may also indicate if exceptionally high temperatures were achieved.

4.10 Discussion

- 4.10.1 The potential for archaeological remains within the evaluation area had been identified by an earlier Environmental Statement (URL 1994) which included fieldwalking (URL 1995) and geophysical prospection (URL 1996). This potential was defined as the possibility of discovering subsoil features and deposits of archaeological interest which may be associated with, or in close proximity to, surface concentrations of prehistoric worked flint and Iron Age, Romano-British and medieval pottery recorded during fieldwalking or anomalies recorded during geophysical survey.
- 4.10.2 The evaluation revealed a small number of archaeological features, the majority concentrated towards the north-west corner of the site. Virtually all of these features were of certain or probable Late Iron Age/early Romano-British date and comprised six shallow ditches or gullies and two shallow pits with evidence for *in situ* burning, both possibly representing hearths. one perhaps of Late Bronze Age date.

- 4.10.3 This group of features lay on a gentle south-west facing slope above the East Stour River, and the scatter of Late Iron Age/early Roman pottery sherds recorded from fieldwalking approximately 100 m to the south during the CTRL Environmental Assessment (the area evaluated by machine trenching was not fieldwalked) may represent part of the same spread of Late Iron Age/early Romano-British activity. An area of high magnetic susceptibility recorded during geophysical prospection also appears to partly correspond with the area covered by this group of features. Together, this evidence might be interpreted as indicating Late Iron Age/early Romano-British settlement rather than, for example, landscape elements (ie field boundaries), although no structural features were certainly identified. Furthermore, the small quantities of charred plant remains from the two possible hearths, one perhaps of Late Bronze Age date, suggest that these features did not lie at the centre of major domestic or crop processing areas.
- 4.10.3 A small quantity of artefacts recovered was provenanced from subsoil contexts, including a few pieces of undiagnostic prehistoric worked flint and three joining sherds of probable Late Neolithic pottery in the vicinity of the later, subsurface Late Iron Age/early Romano-British remains. These artefacts, in conjunction with those recovered from preliminary fieldwalking, including a fragmentary, earlier Neolithic leaf-shaped arrowhead, flint scrapers and five flint-tempered Middle Iron Age pottery sherds, may indicate that settlement contemporaneous with these finds occurred in the vicinity, although no subsurface features can be ascribed to either the Neolithic or Middle Iron Age periods. No subsurface features of medieval date were found to correspond with the scatter of medieval pottery collected during preliminary fieldwalking, and only one sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from the evaluation, from a subsoil context.
- 4.10.4 Only one of the geophysical anomalies recorded during the CTRL Environmental Assessment (URL 1996) has been shown in the evaluation to correspond with a feature of archaeological interest, in this case a post-medieval field boundary. The remaining anomalies have been attributed to an electricity cable, land drains and possible subsurface geological variations.
- 4.10.5 In conclusion, the specific aim of the evaluation (section 1.1.3) has been substantially realised in identifying one area of possible Late Bronze Age activity within the evaluation area, overlapped by a more extensive spread of Late Iron Age/early Romano-British subsurface features which may reflect a continuation of activity represented by surface collected material of the same date from further to the south. However, no features were identified contemporary with the surface collected Neolithic worked flint, Middle Iron Age pottery and medieval pottery, and a post-medieval field boundary was the only feature of archaeological interest that was found to correspond with a geophysical anomaly, the remainder apparently reflecting subsurface geological variations or modern features.

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